

LOS CERRITOS WETLANDS STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM REPORT Nov 2024-JAN 2025

Los Cerritos Wetlands Authority

Executive Summary

From November 2024 - January 2025, the Stewardship Program engaged a total of 202 volunteers who participated in community-based habitat restoration programs. The 404 hours worked by these volunteers contributed \$13,529.96 of in-kind services. These volunteers spread 1,200 pounds of mulch, helping to retain moisture in the soil, adding organics, and suppressing weeds, planted over a hundred plants, removed 350 pounds of weeds and removed 169 pounds of trash. The Los Cerritos Wetlands Stewardship Program (LCWSP), in partnership with the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust and Applied Energy Services (AES), hosted 19 field trips for students. Additionally, the Conservation Corps of Long Beach assisted with digging the holes for the plant installations in the mulefat scrub.

Monthly Habitat Restoration Events

Monthly Habitat Restoration events take place at Zedler Marsh every 1st Saturday of the month. Volunteers help with a plethora of activities from native plant installation, non-native plant removal, mulching, trash clean-ups, plant propagating, watering, site preparation, and trail clean-up.

The LCWSP hosted three monthly habitat restoration events during this period on Nov 2nd, Dec 7th, 2024 and Jan 4th, and 2025 (Figure 1 and 2). A total of 129 volunteers helped remove 169 pounds of trash, spread 1,200 pounds of mulch and removed 250 pounds of weeds. All this help from the community resulted in 182 hours of volunteer work time contributing \$6,178.90 worth of in-kind services. The Stewardship Program accomplished more volunteer tasks this quarter rather than last quarter. These events are supported by funding from the Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) Warne Fund.

Special Events

Community and school groups regularly reach out to participate in special community-based habitat restoration events. The LCWSP hosted five additional community-based habitat restoration events at Zedler Marsh during this period, CSULB class held on November 4, 2024 (Figure 3), and two LBCC Marine Biology classes habitat restoration on November 27th, one LBCC wildlife biology class on December 5th, and Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service on January 20, 2025 (Figure 4). In total, 114 native plants were propagated, and 100 pounds of weeds were removed. A total of 145 volunteer hours were contributed with \$4,922.75 of in-kind services. These events are supported by funding from AES.

Environmental Education Field Trips

The LCWSP continues to host a variety of youth groups and community members out at the wetlands. The Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust works each year to coordinate class field trips for underserved schools. For these field trips the Land Trust provides a bus that picks up students from their school and transports them to Zedler Marsh. At Zedler Marsh, the LCWSP Environmental Educators offer an engaging and informative curriculum of ecological

activities where youth participate in hands-on learning focused on the Los Cerritos Wetlands and Zedler Marsh. Since November 2024, the LCWSP hosted nineteen field trips which accommodated about 562 Long Beach youth school field trips. Since AES funding started in 2023, this program has served 2,539 students. These field trips are sponsored by the Los Cerritos Wetlands Land Trust (Figure 5).

Land Tours

Raptor Ramble, Heron Hike, Salt Marsh Stroll

Each month, the LCWLT hosts a land tour and rotates through the Raptor Ramble, Heron Hike, or Salt Marsh Stroll. These tours immerse visitors in the unique habitats of Los Cerritos Wetlands and allow them to gain new perspectives on the purpose of these rare environments. Members of the public are encouraged to attend all three different tours to experience diverse wildlife encounters in the Los Cerritos Wetlands.

The Raptor Ramble was offered in November 2024, where 18 participants experienced the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands and encountered wildlife, including several bird species. This was an opportunity to also learn about the upcoming habitat restoration and the past and future uses of the site by native peoples.

The Heron Hike which tours the Central Los Cerritos Wetlands was offered in December 2024, where 28 participants explored the freshwater marsh with many wading birds. This hike crosses the San Gabriel River and features a part of the Los Cerritos Wetlands that needs to be restored in the future.

The Salt Marsh Stroll which tours Zedler Marsh was hosted for 16 participants in January 2025. This tour's theme focuses on ethnobotany in the context of an established restoration site which has plants with defined characteristics, such as the thorns on California boxthorn and the aromatic needle-thick leaves on California sagebrush. Ethnobotany focuses on the traditional knowledge of plants and their many uses in cooking, medicine, building structures, and in ceremony. Tour guides focus on plant adaptations and special-status plants that are thriving at Zedler Marsh. The Salt Marsh Stroll covers the intricacies of plant ecology in the salt marsh and the alkali meadow, coastal scrub, mulefat scrub, and other upland plant communities.

Youth Workforce Development

During this quarter, the Conservation Corps of Long Beach (CCLB) dedicated thirteen workdays to habitat restoration activities in Zedler Marsh and Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands to help expand the impact of the stewardship team (Figure 6). CCLB has allowed the LCW Stewardship Program to work efficiently with a larger field team to accomplish priority tasks such as trail repair in the Southern Los Cerritos Wetlands, fuel reduction vegetation clearance, spreading mulch over degraded soils, maintaining fencing, digging holes for planting, and removing nonnative plant species. The CCLB team is very versatile in that they can assist with sensitive plant communities and can take on laborious tasks to complete the job at hand. Their willingness to learn from LCWSP leaders has allowed us to continue to expand the skills and tasks that they can take on.

Stewardship Initiatives

This quarter, with the support of AES funding, Tidal Influence effectively doubled the shaded LCWA growspace area by installing a galvanized steel frame with footings and a new shade cloth (Figure 7). The nursery was further improved with black cloth secured around the perimeter fence, repairs to beams of the original build, new entry plans and gates, and steel nursery tabletops that provide drainage for upland plants. AES funding also supported a very important initiative for the conservation of the endangered hemiparasite, salt marsh bird's beak (*Chloropyron maritimum maritimum*). On January 14, 2025, Tidal Influence outplanted 100,000 seeds of salt marsh bird's beak which is the first outplanting in Los Angeles County (Figure 8).



FIGURE 1. Habitat Restoration 1st Saturday seed collection- 11.02.24



FIGURE 2. Habitat Restoration- 39 volunteers on 1st Saturday 12.07.24



FIGURE 3. Habitat Restoration Salt Marsh Plugs CSULB class 11.04.24



FIGURE 4. MLK Day of Service- Mark Stanley Planting Native Grasses 1.20.25



FIGURE 5. A 3rd Grade Class making Plant Presses 11.21.24



FIGURE 6. CCLB Assisting with Spreading Tarplant Seed 11.08.24



FIGURE 7. The Expanded LCWA Growspace, December 2024



FIGURE 8. Salt Marsh Bird's Beak Outplanting 1.14.25